

Staff Report

WELCH AVENUE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PILOT PROJECT

December 12, 2017

BACKGROUND:

In 2014, the City Council directed staff to identify methods to reduce pedestrian/bicycle and bicycle/car collisions in the area near Welch Avenue and Lincoln Way. City staff, Campustown Action Association (CAA), and students from Iowa State identified alternatives to address these issues.

On May 24, 2016, City Council directed staff to implement a pilot project along the 100 and 200 blocks of Welch Avenue that would remove eight parking spaces in the 100 block and six in the 200 block. The project used concrete planters to close off the parking. Street furniture and bike racks were installed in the newly defined area. The goal was to create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists while creating a usable pedestrian space for the district. The project has been in place since June 2016 with seasonal changes during the winter months that removed the street furniture but left bike racks and the planters in place.

OUTREACH:

The City tried several ways to receive feedback on this project. Feedback was specifically sought from people who may use the space. To try to reach users, the City installed sidewalk stickers with a hashtag. People could then post pictures or feedback with the hashtag in social media and we could find those comments. Unfortunately, only a handful of comments were received by this method.

Business owner feedback was collected separately. The City did traditional outreach such as notifying businesses of the installation, sending a letter requesting feedback, sending notices with utility bills asking for comment, and posting a video to Facebook.

FEEDBACK:**Emails**

The City received feedback on the project through emails based on the outreach activities. The feedback indicated that there is not consensus regarding the project. Most of the comments that did not support the project were related to the reduction in parking in Campustown. Also mentioned were the condition and look of the planters, increased trash in the planters, and furniture not being used regularly.

Supportive comments mentioned feeling that the area was safer for bicyclists. Other comments noted that it was more pedestrian friendly, improved outdoor dining, and the availability of the bike racks installed with the project.

Campustown Action Association (CAA)

CAA indicated it received mixed feedback from its members. Some felt that the loss of parking was an issue, while others believed the benefits of outdoor seating and greenery outweighed the loss of parking. CAA felt the bicycle parking was used frequently and that the seating was used daily. It did receive feedback that patrons did not like the curb and would prefer a flat surface. Overall, CAA is supportive of efforts to improve safety for all modes of transportation and beautification of the area through greenery. CAA's full comments are attached for review.

ISU Student Government

Formal feedback from the ISU Student Government regarding this project has not been received. However, the City Council may recall that this topic was discussed during the October 2016 joint City Council-ISU Student Government meeting. Several members of the Student Government Senate provided feedback in support of the pilot project, noting they had received feedback from other students that the planters made them feel safer when walking or bicycling on Welch Avenue

Ames Bicycle Coalition

The Ames Bicycle Coalition (ABC) provided feedback that promoting bicycling and walking in Campustown should be a high priority. It feels the actions taken do promote the walkability and bikeability of this neighborhood and that the pilot project does make bicycling safer since bicycling is prohibited on the sidewalk in this area. ABC also appreciates the bicycle racks that were installed with the project. ABC's full comments are attached for review.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS:

The City placed cameras to observe the frequency of use of the space shortly after the installation in October 2016 and again in June 2017. The cameras focused on the 100 block of Welch Ave. The pictures in October showed that the tables and benches were not used much during the day, but saw an increase during the nighttime hours. In October, Arcadia Café was still under construction. In the June pictures there was infrequent use of the tables and benches throughout the time period with a slight increase during the nighttime hours. It should be noted that based on pictures and observational data the bike racks by CVS were used frequently throughout.

Staff from Police and Fire were also asked for input on the project. The feedback from Police was that it appeared to reduce some issues that the parked cars presented in the past (pedestrians crossing the road could be seen more easily and traffic moved more freely). However, the increased space for pedestrians to congregate can cause groups of pedestrians to move past the planters and into the roadway during busy times such as at bar close. The Fire Department observed that there have been issues with

delivery trucks now parking in the street. Some of the plantings have affected their visibility of pedestrians. City staff has adjusted the location of several planters to attempt to mitigate this issue. Both departments stated that there is an issue with taxis and rideshare services blocking the street and fire station driveway during busy times. Police is aware of this situation and is working on potential solutions.

NEXT STEPS:

This project was intended to be easily reversible if the City Council felt that it was unsuccessful and that the streetscape needed to be restored to its original configuration. Therefore, the materials purchased for the project (concrete planters and street furniture) can be re-used elsewhere in the City at the conclusion of the project.

As requested, staff has brought back feedback and observations of the pilot project. Staff is now seeking direction for the project. There are several options that City Council could consider.

Option 1. Leave the planters, bike racks, and street furniture in place until Welch Avenue is reconstructed in both the 100 and 200 blocks of Welch Avenue. A portion of Welch Avenue is currently programmed for reconstruction in the FY 2019/20 Capital Improvements Plan. The design process for this reconstruction project could include developing alternatives for permanent changes to the streetscape based on the observations from this pilot project.

Option 2. Adjust the scale of the project. The City Council could choose to only leave the planters in certain areas of the project. For example, City staff's observations of the project indicate that the bike rack plaza at the north end of the project is regularly utilized. The City Council could direct City staff to restore parking to other areas of the project and leave only this protected bike rack section in place. The planters and street furniture from other areas of the project would be relocated to appropriate locations elsewhere on City property.

Option 3. Remove all planters, street furniture, and bicycle racks. Restore parking to pre-existing conditions. Through this option, City staff would remove the planters and all street furniture and distribute them to appropriate locations elsewhere on City property. City staff would strive to install parking meters, signage, and pavement markings prior to the winter plowing season.

From: Portobello Road <portobelofashion@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2016 04:11PM
Subject: Campustown Planter Project

History: [↩ This message has been replied to.](#)

Hi Corey,

I am a business owner in Campustown. I've been able to observe the pilot project first hand as there have been planters placed, and parking removed, directly in front of my business.

Unfortunately, it seems as though the planters haven't been kept up with and it is starting to devalue the area in front of the building I am in. The plants are uprooted, seeming as though the job hadn't been finished when they were placed in each one.

I've attached pictures so you can see. With money have been spent on the project, it makes sense that we would at least want it to look nice. If plants aren't buried when they are placed in each planter, they aren't able to root and in return die. Now there are just planters filled with dead plants, yikes! I thought you might appreciate a heads up with Homecoming happening this weekend. The team may want to make sure they look their best with all the alumni in town...and from here on out. If we can't keep up with the project, maybe it's time to move forward with parking again.

Thanks for your help with the project!















Talia Jensen

Owner

Portobello Road

PortobelloRoadblog.com

Attachments:


image1.JPG

image2.JPG

image3.JPG

From: Portobello Road <portobellofashion@gmail.com>
To: Corey Mellies <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Monday, December 19, 2016 01:51PM
Subject: Planters

History:  This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Hi Corey,

I hope you are having a great holiday season. Unfortunately, things in Campustown haven't been quite so great.

First: When will someone be around to clean out the planter area of the snow? People are unable to enjoy them at the moment with the snow and mush making the area look pretty dirty and uninviting. (Wasn't this the purpose of putting the planters in)

Second: The poor/lack of upkeep is devaluing the area in front of my business. I am willing to continue to give the planters a try but they sure aren't adding any value at the moment. The plants are dead in the planters, they now hold vomit and trash.

Third: With the cold weather and Christmas shoppers, complaining about the lack of parking has only increased. I'm at a loss for what to tell people other than, "CVS has been very kind to not tow too quickly." This shouldn't be CVS's responsibility, and customers shouldn't have to fight over parking in an area that is supposed to welcome visitors. This is even more disheartening as a visit Main Street and see their Free lot on the south side of the street with plenty of inviting spaces, even worse over small business Saturday when they had FREE METERED PARKING. It seems like we are really getting the shaft here in Campustown. As college attendance increases every semester it doesn't make sense for there to be less and less parking.

Thank you for listening to my complaints. Business has decreased greatly without spaces available for people to just pop in and make a quick purchase.

Merry Christmas,

Talia Jensen

Owner

Portobello Road

PortobelloRoadblog.com

From: Tim Hoekstra <hoekstrat2@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Thursday, June 15, 2017 07:02PM
Subject: campustown streetscape suggestion

Hi, as a Welch Ave. resident I believe the addition of tables and planters at the Welch & Hunt intersection in front of Trio/Blue Owl Bar would improve safety. Whenever a large vehicle parks in one or both of the parking spaces closest to the intersection it creates an unsafe blind spot for drivers on Hunt. They can't see southbound traffic on Welch. Having seating and low-growing plants in the planters would improve sightlines and safety for both drivers and pedestrians.

Thank you for considering my suggestion.


If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Have a great day!

Tim Hoekstra
503 Welch Ave.
292-8248

From: Charlie Case <cyclnz@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Friday, July 21, 2017 06:54PM
Subject: Welch Avenue Extended Sidewalk

History:  This message has been replied to.

Corey,

In the City of Ames Electric Services newsletter you invited comments on the extended sidewalk along Welch Avenue. I am a resident of Cedar Rapids, but own a condo in west Ames and spend over 90 nights in Ames to attending sporting events. I generally don't keep much food stocked, so I eat out frequently. And I also shop at the Cyclone clothing stores. There are many good choices in campustown, but the lack of convenient parking makes it difficult to support these businesses.

The loss of parking close to stores is a move in the wrong direction. I would like to see more short term public parking, not less. The parking in downtown Ames is near ideal with the large lots behind the businesses. I realize that can't be replicated, but if there were any way to find more parking in proximity to the businesses campustown, it would be greatly appreciated by those that aren't within walking distance.

Charlie Case

From: Aspen Pflanz <pflanzaspen@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Monday, July 31, 2017 05:29PM
Subject: Thoughts on Welch Ave. Parking Removal

Hello Corey Mellies,

My name is Aspen Pflanz, and I am an undergraduate at Iowa State in History and Political Science. I moved to Ames in the Fall of 2014 and have lived here permanently since August 2015. I plan on sticking around at ISU after I graduate in December to earn a graduate degree in Community and Regional Planning and pursuing a career in historic preservation.

That being said, I've been keeping up-to-date and interested in what the City of Ames has been up to in regards to improving the city's walkability and traffic flow. When I first heard the news of removing parking on Welch Ave., I was against it. I assumed that even more congestion would build up along the street because cars would need to continuously circle the block until a space opened up. It also didn't make much sense to me for the City to replace parking along the street with outdoor seating since parking is useful year-round unlike outdoor seating that's only practical for warmer months.

However, the past few months completely changed my perspective. I've been reading a lot of existing literature about urban design and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods, which frequently argues that parking is a poison for walkable neighborhoods. Jeff Speck's *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time* has been especially influential in my new attitude towards city parking and transportation development. More specifically to Campustown, though, was my capstone history course research about the riots of ISU's past VEISHEA celebrations. I understand now that the urban layout of Campustown actually *did* contribute to the VEISHEA disturbances. I also ride my bike quite a bit around Ames, so creating more biker-friendly roads makes me a whole lot happier. I don't have to worry about as much traffic along Welch now that cars aren't trying to park on both sides of the road. When I go into the area for coffee or cookies now, I really appreciate the picnic tables!

Thus, I am a firm believer that the removal of parking spaces along Welch is a step in the right direction for making Campustown not only a safer place, but a more attractive space. There is a large parking ramp one block away from Welch that I have not used once during my years in Ames. The City needs to put parking in its place. Walkable neighborhoods need to focus on the pedestrians using the area for reasons other than parking. Encouraging pedestrians to "sit and smell the roses" with the new planters and picnic tables is on the right track to establishing a city less dependent on automobiles and more aware of their surroundings.

Thank you,

Aspen Pflanz

Sent from my iPad

From: elizabeth <ewentzel@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Monday, July 31, 2017 09:01AM
Subject: Welch Ave

Hello

I received your email contact via Ames Bicycle Coalition as a member. I am also a fellow in the IA Walking College, Healthiest IA Initiative.

I am aware the City began an experiment a year ago along the first block or so of Welch south from Lincoln by removing parking and installing some seating and planters and bike racks. I read this is now under review as to whether to continue that or not. I think the seating and bike racks are a huge plus to this area. I think this area of Welch would be a great ped mall. If we build for cars we get cars and parking. If we build for destinations we get people walking and biking. I think the reduced parking, tables, bike lanes and bike racks on Welch promote a healthier lifestyle, are good for businesses in the area and make campus-town a very pleasant destination. This is the way of the future for city design.

I urge you to continue to develop this area of Welch into a very bike and pedestrian friendly place.

Thank You,
Elizabeth Wentzel
1125 Marston Ave
Ames

From: "City of Ames,IA" <webnotification@cityofames.org>
To: "Mellies, Corey " <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Monday, July 31, 2017 01:12PM
Subject: Email contact from City of Ames, IA

Message submitted from the <City of Ames, IA > website.

Site Visitor Name: Schuyler Corson
Site Visitor Email: wayfarer4@yahoo.com

In response to a request by the Ames Bicycle Coalition, I would like to express my appreciation of the bicycle/human friendly section along Welch Avenue, and would like to see more of such design, particularly around downtown, as well as the bike paths around town. I, as a dedicated commuter cyclist, am happy with the efforts made for bicycle friendly places around town, and look to see more.

My thanks

From: "Haas, Barbara L [ENGL]" <yikes@iastate.edu>
To: "cmellies@city.ames.ia.us" <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Monday, July 31, 2017 01:13PM
Subject: Welch Ave pilot project

My thoughts:

disallow parking on the east side of Welch Ave but remove bump-outs, planters & cafe seating so as to create an actual bike lane and also widen the thoroughfare.

Unless the City can designate daily custodial tidying up, the planters aren't suited to the kind of block 100 Welch is. Too much of a magnet for trash & vandalism.

Thank you!

Barbara

From: Diane E Nelson <djessnelson@yahoo.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Wednesday, August 02, 2017 11:00AM
Subject: Welch Ave

We've enjoyed the plantings and encourage you to make them permanent... tho it will be a different ambience when the gas station replaces the post office location.

Another couple thoughts:

Maybe try annual grasses or something like bronze fennel for height instead of shrubs in the planters?

Maybe paint a "carpet/rug" to help further distinguish the area?

Thanks
Diane Nelson
503 Ash Ave

Sent from my iPad

From: "D & A Weber" <daleannepatweb@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Monday, August 07, 2017 11:47AM
Subject: Welch Ave Parking Issue

Mr Mellies,

The lack of parking on Welch Ave has made getting to stores/restaurants rather difficult. With only one side of the street available for parking and many other businesses needing parking for their customers. There were spots on the west side behind the businesses before the City approved all of the new apartment buildings near campus town. It's fine to use the new parking garage if you are going to be at one of the establishments for several hours. When you business only takes 5-15 minutes then parking that far away is rather inconvenient.

I need to frequent Copyworks on a regular basis for a volunteer job I do copying newsletters and other documents. I have used them for the last 13 years as they give me the best price and the customer service is great. This last year with the east side of the street not accessible for parking it has been very difficult to get in and out of the businesses quickly as parking spots are hard to find for 10-15 mins, especially during Sept.-April! I know that many elderly who use the services at Copyworks for personal items to be put together for family gatherings or postcards. I have seen first hand how difficult it is for them find parking that's not far away as walking is difficult, especially in winter weather.

On a safety point, I don't think this new design of the flower boxes on the east side has made a lot of change due to the students/local residents still bike on the main sidewalks. Maybe not having the extra parking during evening hours has helped with less party problems/riots. I have rarely seen anyone using the benches or picnic tables. The last part about safety is trying to pull out into the street from the east side by CVS or Indian Delights as you are trying to miss the pedestrians/bikers on the actual sidewalk and then the next section watch for those who might be crossing the road in that area before the street.

I think it would be a good idea to move the street lights off of the road as that would help create a few more parking spaces. Most street lights are on the sidewalk next to the roads. Open up the parking on the east side of Welch just north of CVS until it gets to Indian Delights. This way the roads can be cleared in the winter between the driveways easier through that section.

Parking has always been a problem but it has gotten worse with the addition of apartment buildings and those people will want to park on the street too. Plus many students don't really care if they parking tickets maybe parking tickets in the campus town area should be higher.

Please reconsider the current street design on Welch to open up more parking for the businesses and the community patrons who want to visit these locations along Welch Ave.

Sincerely,
Anne

From: JoAnn Kinart <joann.kinart@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Friday, August 18, 2017 01:07PM
Subject: Welch Avenue

Corey:

I am happy to see that the City is asking for comments on the Welch Avenue streetscape.

As a native of Ames I have been a customer of many of the businesses over the years. It has always been an issue to find a parking space, but it has become extremely difficult since the number of spaces has been reduced. The businesses on Welch Avenue are frequented by more than students who may be walking; there are those of us who drive and need a parking space. I don't believe that the businesses want to limit their customers just to the student population.

I visited one of the businesses on last week and asked if they were in favor of the reduction in parking spaces. The answer was "no." I would suggest that each of the businesses be visited asking for their input.

Thank you.

JoAnn Kinart
2823 Monroe
Ames, Iowa

From: Mark Heinrich <runmarkrun.heinrich@gmail.com>
To: Cmellics@city.ames.ia.us

Date: Saturday, August 12, 2017 09:43AM
Subject: Welch Avenue

The concept of a wide pedestrian friendly avenue is exciting. Ames needs more outdoor dining downtown and elsewhere and this would foster that night out with the town atmosphere.

Until the actual hardscape is done this will not get the positives, people will feel like they are walking or sitting in the street. You may only hear the negatives of less parking available.

Mark Heinrich

From: Tim Hoekstra <hoekstrat2@gmail.com>
To: Corey Mellies <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 06:37AM
Subject: Welch Ave. reconstruction suggestion

Good morning,

When Welch is reconstructed in the next couple years one improvement that would be welcome would be moving the street light bases out of the parking areas and to the edge of the sidewalks. The poles are currently in the way and make it more difficult to park than it has to be. It also makes it difficult in the winter to clear snow out effectively.

Also, removing light poles from the parking areas might open up another space or two.

Have a great day!

Tim Hoekstra
503 Welch Ave.

From: SUSAN FRASER <SFRASER04@msn.com>
To: "cmellies@city.ames.ia.us" <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Friday, August 18, 2017 12:06PM
Subject: Welch Avenue

Hi Corey,

I recently read the information in the "City Side" regarding the ongoing plans for Welch Avenue.

I am no longer a student at ISU, but I have lived most of my life in Ames. I believe in supporting the community and the University. I believe in spending my money locally. As a long time member of the community, I realize we do much for the convenience of the students and their numbers.

I get the feeling that the businesses of Campus Town no longer want the business of the town's people. Is that correct? Do the businesses no longer want our money? You are making it extremely difficult to get to those businesses by removing most of the parking. I know that bus/transit thing (sorry I don't recall the official name) is supposed to give parking for the area, but it is nearly impossible to find a spot to park. The Union ramp is usually full also.

By placing those planters in the way and enlarging the sidewalks, it says to me as a taxpayer that they no longer want our business. Oh, you do still want our tax money though, to fund these projects and pay you for these ideas, right?

I think you need to go back to the drawing board and find more parking for the area. My friends and I were just discussing this a couple of weeks ago. There are businesses there that we would like to use for their services, but we don't see it happening with the way it is today and with the plans for the future.

Thanks.

Susan Fraser

1444 Breckinridge Ct.

Ames, IA 50010

From: Stephen Ringlee <sringlee@hotmail.com>
To: "cmellies@city.ames.ia.us" <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Monday, August 21, 2017 08:29AM
Subject: Welch Ave Comments

Dear Corey:

Some comments on Welch Avenue from a neighbor, SCAN member and frequent visitor:

1. The decision to place planters on the east side was very foolish. These planters have added no safe spaces for pedestrian or dining users but instead have not only removed parking but created hazards for cars and bicyclists coming down the street. I note that nobody has used the freed-up former parking spaces for anything except the occasional push cart. Even those can't fit in between these massive planters. While it would be nice to employ the liberated street space for dining, no restaurants have yet done so because of the poor design. I also note that the planters themselves resemble something out of North Korea: industrial, massive, cheap, ugly in the extreme.
2. A better near-term plan would be to return most of the street to parking but install selected street bump-outs in front of designated restaurants, protected by more attractive barriers, to provide streetscape dining experiences but for now to leave most of the street in parking.
3. Yet a better long-term idea is to extend the sidewalk on lower Welch east side out to create a pedestrian path and dining area with more attractive planters. This would narrow the street but it would still be wide enough for traffic, emergency vehicles and shareway bicycle use. Planters should be narrow, inconspicuous and well-designed.
4. The west side should be left in parking for the local merchants.
5. Bicycle traffic on all of Welch should remain on the street but with far better "shareway" marks on the pavements to emphasize to motorists that they must share the space with cyclists.
6. The sidewalks on lower Welch should have permanent bicycle parking stands to which bikes can be locked. At present, there are no stands and most people lock bikes to parking meters, etc. which is inappropriate.

Kind regards,

Steve Ringlee

From: Sarah Cady <sarahdcady@gmail.com>
To: cmellies@city.ames.ia.us, Steve Schainker <:sschainker@city.ames.ia.us>, bphillips@city.ames.ia.us, Damion Pregitzer <dpregitzer@city.ames.ia.us>

Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 10:57AM
Subject: Welch Avenue Feedback

Hi Steve, Brian, Corey, and Damion,

The Ames Bicycle Coalition would like to submit brief feedback regarding the streetscaping experiment on Welch Ave. In general, we feel that promoting bicycling and walking in Campustown should be a high priority for the City of Ames. Making bicycling and walking safe and enjoyable for the rapidly increasing number of students residing south of Lincoln Way should be the top consideration as we move forward in planning for the future of Welch Ave. The city has purposely reduced urban parking requirements in this neighborhood to make it clear to residents that they should not bring a car if they are living in Campustown and to allow for higher density residences. However, that means we as a city must prioritize the walkability of this neighborhood.

From a bicycling standpoint, we feel that the streetscaping experiment makes bicycling down Welch Ave safer. This is achieved by improving visibility for drivers and bicyclists and also by removing the threat of a cyclist getting "doored" (riding into a car door being opened) when the cyclists are traveling downhill (northbound) at a relatively high rate of speed. Since bicycling on the sidewalk along Welch Ave is prohibited by city code, it should be a priority to make cycling in the street as safe as possible. The addition of bicycle parking off of the sidewalk is also a nice component that improves the convenience of bicycling while maintaining a sidewalk that can accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic. We feel that the city should work closely with Iowa State University in order to make a safe bicycling corridor down Welch Ave in order to accommodate the large numbers of cyclists traveling into campus from the south campus neighborhoods each morning.

As far as the concerns of business owners that the reduction of parking will result in a reduction in sales, there is now a large body of research that supports the hypothesis that improving biking and walking accessibility in a neighborhood actually tends to increase business in these types of districts. (<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2012/12/cyclists-and-pedestrians-can-end-spending-more-each-month-drivers/4066/> , <https://www.citylab.com/solutions/2015/03/the-complete-business-case-for-converting-street-parking-into-bike-lanes/387595/>) While drivers tend to spend more money in one stop, pedestrians and cyclists are more likely to patronize a business more regularly when it is easily and safely accessible by walking and biking. In Campustown, we need to move away from the mentality that parking should be very cheap and always readily available directly outside of a business destination.

Thank you for your consideration of our feedback, and we look forward to a Campustown that prioritizes bicycling and walking.

Cheers,
Sarah Cady
Ames Bicycle Coalition President

From: Sarah Cady <sarahdcady@gmail.com>
To: Corey Mellies <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us>, Damion Pregitzer <dpregitzer@city.ames.ia.us>, bphillips@city.ames.ia.us, Steve Schainker <sschainker@city.ames.ia.us>
Cc: E Wentzel <ewentzel@gmail.com>, Steve Libbey <slibbey@netins.net>

Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2017 03:31PM
Subject: Re: Welch Ave. Pilot Project w/ Parking Removal

Hi all,

The Ames Bicycle Coalition would like to submit brief feedback regarding the streetscaping experiment on Welch Ave. In general, we feel that promoting bicycling and walking in Campustown should be a high priority for the City of Ames. Making bicycling and walking safe and enjoyable for the rapidly increasing number of students residing south of Lincoln Way should be the top consideration as we move forward in planning for the future of Welch Ave. The city has purposely reduced urban parking requirements in Campustown, while increasing density, to make it clear to residents that they should not bring a car. That means we as a city must prioritize the walkability and bikeability of this neighborhood.

From a bicycling standpoint, we feel that the streetscaping experiment makes bicycling down Welch Ave safer. This is achieved by improving visibility for drivers and bicyclists and also by removing the threat of a cyclist getting "doored" (riding into a car door being opened) when cyclists are traveling downhill (northbound) at a relatively high rate of speed. Since bicycling on the sidewalk along Welch Ave is prohibited by city code, it should be a priority to make cycling in the street as safe as possible. The addition of bicycle parking off of the sidewalk is also a nice component that improves the convenience of bicycling while maintaining a sidewalk that can accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic. Having wider sidewalks and discouraging bicyclists from using sidewalks also makes for a safer and more accessible Campustown for mobility impaired individuals using wheelchairs.

As far as business concerns for the reduction of traffic resulting in a reduction in business, there is now a large body of research that supports the hypothesis that improving biking and walking accessibility in a neighborhood actually tends to increase business in these types of districts. (<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2012/12/cyclists-and-pedestrians-can-end-spending-more-each-month-drivers/4066/>) While drivers tend to spend more money in one stop, pedestrians and cyclists are more likely to patronize a business more regularly when it is easily and safely accessible by walking and biking.

Thank you for your consideration of our feedback, and we look forward to a Campustown that prioritizes bicycling and walking and accessibility for all Ames residents.

Cheers,
Sarah Cady

Ames Bicycle Coalition President

On Tue, Nov 21, 2017 at 8:16 AM, Corey Mellies <cmellies@city.ames.ia.us> wrote:

The City of Ames has sent out a letter to adjacent property owners and residents asking for feedback on the Welch Ave. Pilot Project that removed parking and added planters, seating and bike racks. I thought that your organizations may want to add your own feedback that may be used in our report to Council. The letter asks that we receive feedback by Dec. 4 as a report will go to Council on Dec. 12. If you have

already provided feedback please feel free to add any additional thoughts. If you have any questions please let me know. Thank You



Corey Mellies, P.E.
Director of Fleet Services

[515.239.5520](tel:515.239.5520) *main* | [515.337.2314](tel:515.337.2314) *cell* | [515.239.5529](tel:515.239.5529) *fax*

cmellies@city.ames.ia.us | City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue | Ames, IA 50010

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Attachments:

Image.15112725992440.gif



campustown
action
association

Campustown Action Association
119 Stanton Ave, Suite 602
Ames, IA 50014

December 4, 2017

I am writing to provide feedback on the Welch Avenue Planter Project. The Campustown Action Association reached out to our members several times throughout the implementation of the project. Responses were quite varied. There were some member businesses who felt the removal of parking on the east side of Welch was inconvenient for their customers. Their issue with the project seemed to stem only from the loss of parking, with no real opposition to planters and seating. There were also many members in favor of the project. They felt the benefits of outdoor seating and greenery seemed to outweigh the number of parking spots made unavailable.

The bicycle parking was highly used on a daily basis. There was also daily use of the seating areas on all but the most inclement weather days. In talking with patrons, the area seemed to be well-received. While they liked having gathering space, most commented they would prefer the seating to be on a flat surface, rather than having to deal with the curb. There were also positive comments from bicycles. Overall they felt safer traveling north on Welch without worrying about cars pulling out into traffic. The planters themselves provide much needed "green" in the district. We feel these plants are a good first step in the beautification efforts necessary to creating a vibrant, welcoming district for the entire community to enjoy.

CAA has and will continue to support the City of Ames and the City Council in their efforts to make Welch Avenue safer and easier to navigate for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

As always thank you for your time,

Karin Chitty
Executive Director